

Welcome to The Compassionate Friends. We are sorry for the reason you are here, but are glad that you found us. You Need Not Walk Alone, we are The Compassionate Friends.

DECEMBER 2019

HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER

www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org

We meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.

(Our next meeting is Tuesday, Dec. 10th)

at

Cypress Creek Christian Church 6823 Cypresswood Drive, Room #3 Spring, Texas 77379

The Church is located between the courthouse and Barbara Bush Library. At the York Minster traffic light turn into the church parking area. We meet in Room #3 which is down six steps off the main lobby of the Church on the Library side. Follow the posted signs to the meeting room.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MISSION STATEMENT

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

To the Newly Bereaved

As the years pass, we see new members come into the chapter, and we try to help them with their grief as we progress in our own. Over and over again, I have seen newly bereaved parents come to their first meeting totally devastated and convinced that their lives are over. Through the months (and years) I have seen them struggle and suffer and try to find meaning in their lives again. And they do! Through all the anger, pain and tears, somehow the human spirit is able to survive and flower again in a new life – perhaps a changed life and possibly a sadder one, but a stronger one nevertheless.

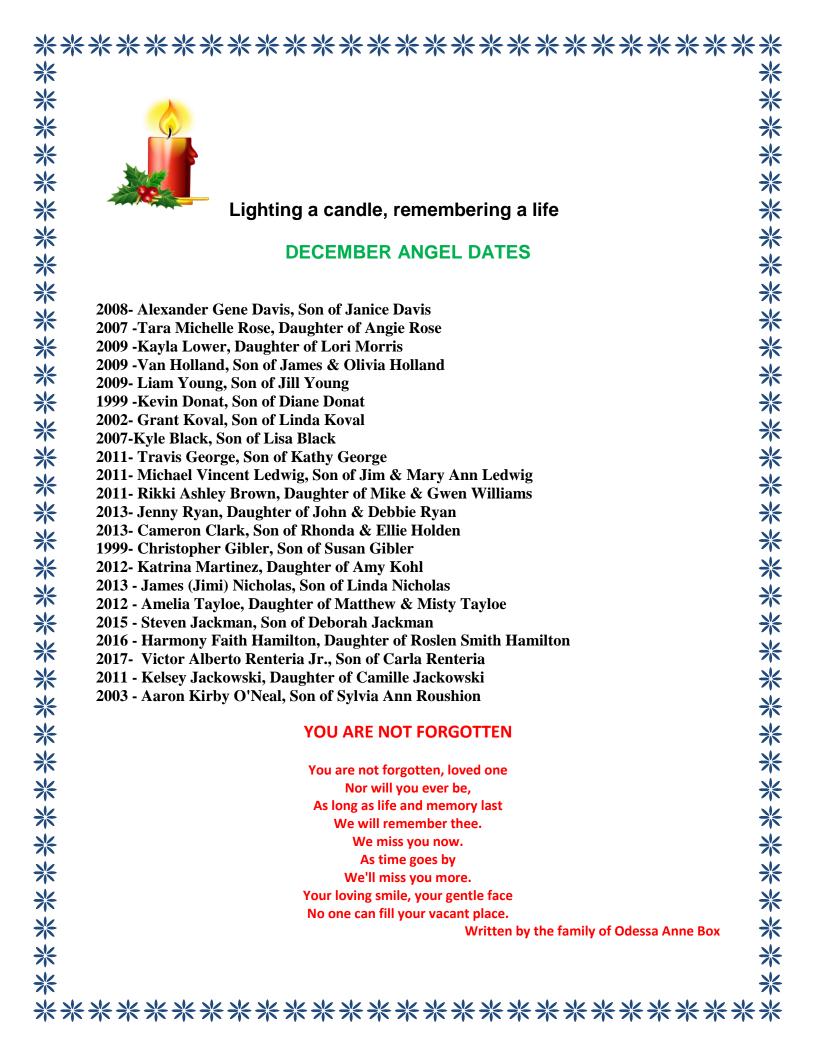
We feel so weak and crushed when our beloved children die, but I know because I have seen it countless times in the years I've been involved with The Compassionate Friends that we can make it together. When you walked through the door for the first meeting, you were frightened and nervous; but with that step you made a statement about your life. With that first step through the door, you said you wanted to try, you wanted to find a reason for living again, that you weren't willing to be swallowed by your grief. You wanted to go forward, and those first steps into The Compassionate Friends began your journey.

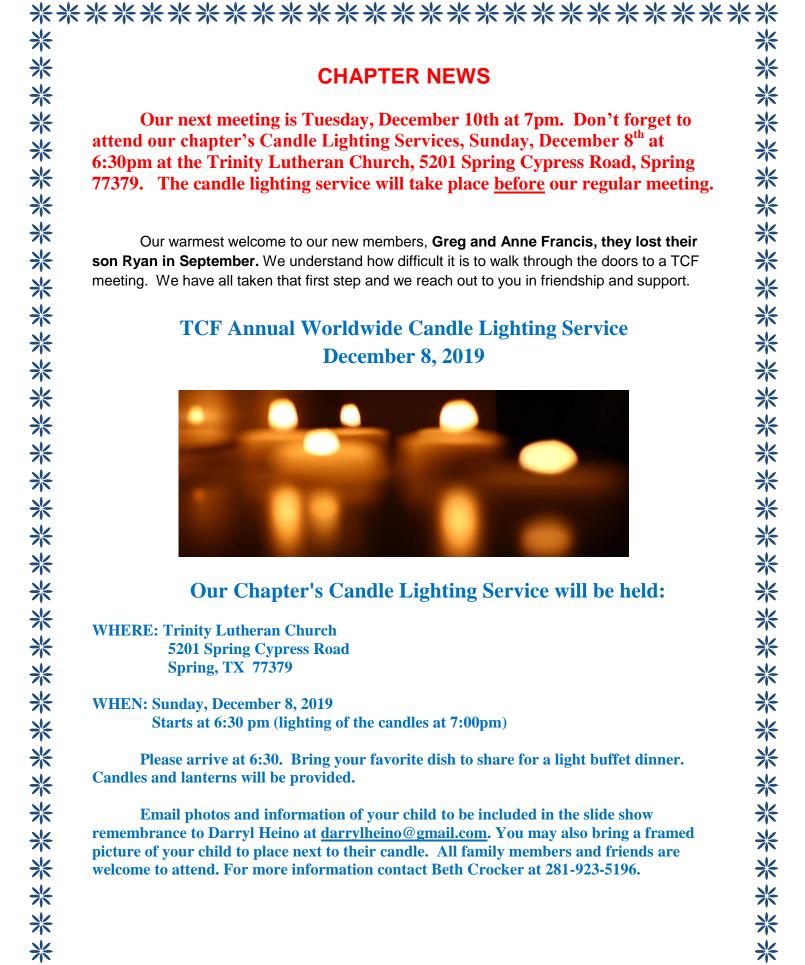
The journey will be a long one, for you loved your child with all your heart and soul. When that child died, a part of you was ripped away. It takes a long time to repair that large hole. The journey will not always be steady or constant; there will be many setbacks. Those of us who have taken the journey before you can assure you that, while there may be no rainbow at the other end, there is indeed "light at the end of the tunnel."

We want to help you as we were helped, but in the beginning and in the long run, you must help yourself. You have to want to get better, to talk about your loss, to struggle through the grief. We will listen, suggest, share and laugh and cry with you; and we hope, at this time next year, you'll be several steps along in your personal journey through grief. Then you can begin to help others.



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※	Lighting a candle, cherishing a birth	*
******	DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS	***********
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ル	1989 - Alex Flood, Son of John & Alice Flood	*
バル	1985 - Jerry Dwight Tanksley, Jr., Son of Virginia Tanksley	ネ
米	1980- Garrett Conrad Ford, Son of Leigh Heard	*
米	1986- Lance Anderson, Son of John & Dianna Brumley	米
米	2006- Logan Xavier Venegas, Son of Rochelle Snyder 1990- Kevin Thrift, Son of Stephanie & Tim Thrift	*
*****	1985- Danny Ewing, Son of Steffani L. Ewing	*
火	1975- Tiffany Gower, Daughter of Brenda Whitworth	\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
ア	1985- Lauren Ovelgonne Tenney, Daughter of Steve & Carol Ovelgonne	が
米	1992- Grant Goodwin, Son of Linda Foraker	*
米	1990- Ryan Bennett, Son of Dan & Cindy Bennett	米
米	1990- Zack "Moose" Triplett, Son of Trina Cash	*
4	1984- Cameron Clark, Son of Rhonda & Ellie Holden	
** ** **	2003- Milana Ramirez, Daughter of Dean & Hannah Ramirez	\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
バル	1983- Peter Ly, Brother of Kimberly Ly	不
	1963- Ginger Ware, Daughter of Roberta Ware	米
米	1995 - David Arthur, Son of Cathy Arthur	米
米	2008 - Angel Joseph Vasquez, Son of Mary Vasquez and Jose Herrera	*
1	2013 - Ariel Suniga, Daughter of Selena Suniga	*
ン	2016 - Harmony Faith Hamilton, Daughter of Roslen Smith Hamilton 1984- Zach Doss, Son of Susan Doss	\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
が	2001- Stephen Verdell Jr., Son of Stephen Verdell and Melinda Nagle	が
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	The Birth and Death of our loved ones are always very difficult. Especially during this	
不	holiday season. Please remember to include these families in your thoughts and prayers on the	eir 🏋
********	very difficult days.	***********
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CHAPTER NEWS

Our next meeting is Tuesday, December 10th at 7pm. Don't forget to attend our chapter's Candle Lighting Services, Sunday, December 8th at 6:30pm at the Trinity Lutheran Church, 5201 Spring Cypress Road, Spring 77379. The candle lighting service will take place before our regular meeting.

Our warmest welcome to our new members, Greg and Anne Francis, they lost their son Ryan in September. We understand how difficult it is to walk through the doors to a TCF meeting. We have all taken that first step and we reach out to you in friendship and support.

TCF Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting Service December 8, 2019



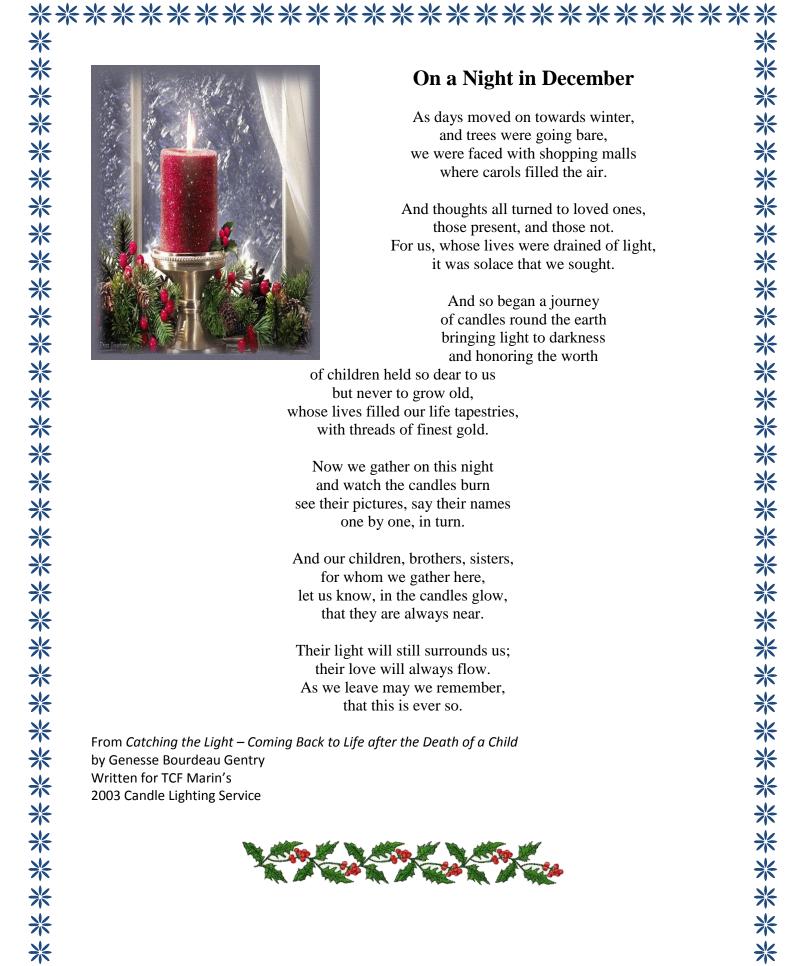
Our Chapter's Candle Lighting Service will be held:

WHERE: Trinity Lutheran Church 5201 Spring Cypress Road Spring, TX 77379

WHEN: Sunday, December 8, 2019 Starts at 6:30 pm (lighting of the candles at 7:00pm)

Please arrive at 6:30. Bring your favorite dish to share for a light buffet dinner. Candles and lanterns will be provided.

Email photos and information of your child to be included in the slide show remembrance to Darryl Heino at darrylheino@gmail.com. You may also bring a framed picture of your child to place next to their candle. All family members and friends are welcome to attend. For more information contact Beth Crocker at 281-923-5196.





On a Night in December

As days moved on towards winter, and trees were going bare, we were faced with shopping malls where carols filled the air.

And thoughts all turned to loved ones, those present, and those not. For us, whose lives were drained of light, it was solace that we sought.

> And so began a journey of candles round the earth bringing light to darkness and honoring the worth

of children held so dear to us but never to grow old, whose lives filled our life tapestries, with threads of finest gold.

Now we gather on this night and watch the candles burn see their pictures, say their names one by one, in turn.

And our children, brothers, sisters, for whom we gather here, let us know, in the candles glow, that they are always near.

Their light will still surrounds us; their love will always flow. As we leave may we remember, that this is ever so.

From Catching the Light – Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child by Genesse Bourdeau Gentry Written for TCF Marin's 2003 Candle Lighting Service





Even in normal times, tradition isn't what it is always cracked up to be, and sometimes "tradition" gets in the way of sanity. Often we cling to tradition because it's easier, we don't want to offend others, we don't want to be embarrassed, or we don't know what else to do. When you are a grieving parent, giving in to tradition can drive you over the edge.

I found myself in the "tradition predicament" regarding putting up a tree the first Christmas holiday after my son, Chad died. I didn't want, need, or have the energy to put up a tree. Yet other family members wanted a tree and they wanted it as it always had been, big, bright, and decorated with ornaments they had purchased or made through the years. What eventually took place, with regard to a tree, changed our holiday forever and it has been a good thing for everyone involved.

I don't know the exact circumstances of how our "new tradition" came into being that first year. But I do remember frustration, tears, and upset people. I also remember my daughter saying to me it was her Christmas too and she needed a tree. It was her older brother, the one she remembered getting up with every Christmas morning when she was little that was dead, and she had to have something so she could deal with the emptiness. So she came up with a plan. She and her father would go find a tree and she would take care of the decorations all by herself.

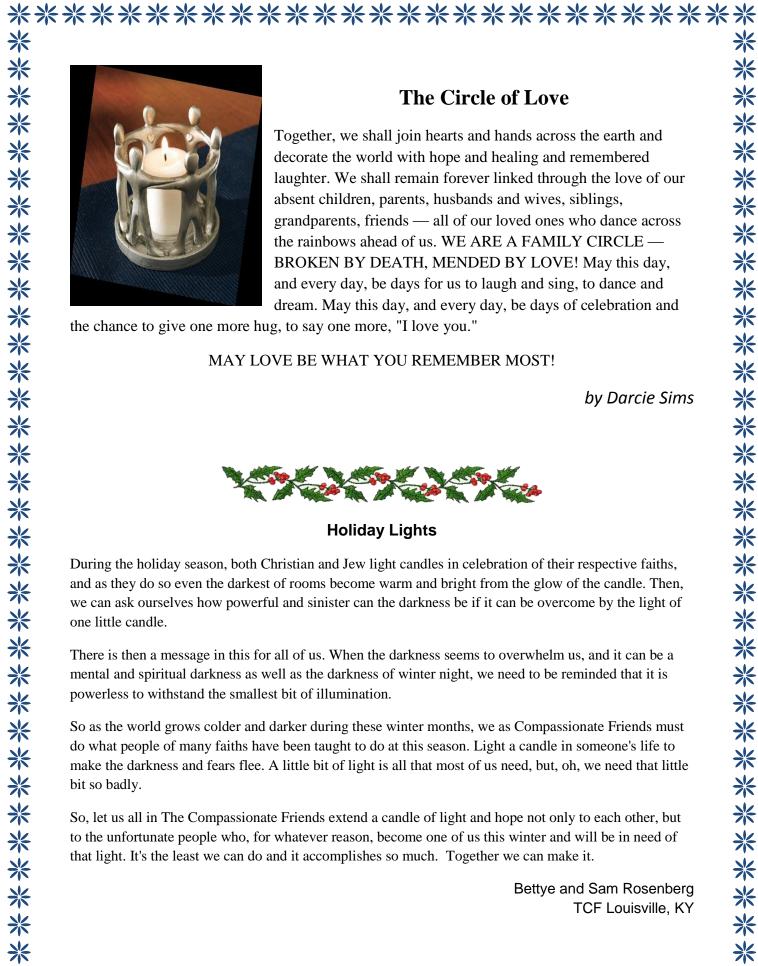
That was ten Christmases ago and this year, once again, my husband and my daughter will leave early in the morning, a week before Christmas, and hunt for a tree, just the two of them. When they come home, I will prepare breakfast, while they get the tree in the holder, and move the furniture. We will sit down together and enjoy our meal and then my husband and I will leave for several hours. During that time we will do whatever we feel like doing. We have gone to the cemetery, gone for walks, gone to the bookstore, visited friends, etc. When we return, my daughter will have decorated our Christmas tree, and the whole house!

Every year the tree has been different, limited only to my daughter's imagination and the budget we keep her on. She didn't use our regular ornaments for a while and when she did, she told me ahead of time and said how meaningful it was for her to be the one who put Chad's ornaments back on the tree. We have continued this "new tradition" to this day. Now, I find angel ornaments to put on the tree to honor our missing angel, and enjoy with my husband, sons, and family, my daughter's traditional tribute to her brother. This "changing tradition" has been so healing. Our family has had the brightness and beauty that a lighted tree can provide, and I have been able to save my energy for other things I wanted to do.

During the next few weeks, I hope you will make the activities of the season as stress free as you can. I hope that you will feel free to experiment with new traditions, knowing there is no "right way" to go through this season, only "your way." I hope that you will remember Christmas is only one day and that the time leading up to that "one day" will probably be more difficult than the actual day. And finally, I hope for peace in your hearts, if not today then tomorrow, or the tomorrow after, or the tomorrow after that.

Sue Anderson TCF, South Bend, IN In Memory of my son, Chad October 30, 2012







The Circle of Love

Together, we shall join hearts and hands across the earth and decorate the world with hope and healing and remembered laughter. We shall remain forever linked through the love of our absent children, parents, husbands and wives, siblings, grandparents, friends — all of our loved ones who dance across the rainbows ahead of us. WE ARE A FAMILY CIRCLE — BROKEN BY DEATH, MENDED BY LOVE! May this day, and every day, be days for us to laugh and sing, to dance and dream. May this day, and every day, be days of celebration and

the chance to give one more hug, to say one more, "I love you."

MAY LOVE BE WHAT YOU REMEMBER MOST!

by Darcie Sims



Holiday Lights

During the holiday season, both Christian and Jew light candles in celebration of their respective faiths, and as they do so even the darkest of rooms become warm and bright from the glow of the candle. Then, we can ask ourselves how powerful and sinister can the darkness be if it can be overcome by the light of one little candle.

There is then a message in this for all of us. When the darkness seems to overwhelm us, and it can be a mental and spiritual darkness as well as the darkness of winter night, we need to be reminded that it is powerless to withstand the smallest bit of illumination.

So as the world grows colder and darker during these winter months, we as Compassionate Friends must do what people of many faiths have been taught to do at this season. Light a candle in someone's life to make the darkness and fears flee. A little bit of light is all that most of us need, but, oh, we need that little bit so badly.

So, let us all in The Compassionate Friends extend a candle of light and hope not only to each other, but to the unfortunate people who, for whatever reason, become one of us this winter and will be in need of that light. It's the least we can do and it accomplishes so much. Together we can make it.

Bettye and Sam Rosenberg TCF Louisville, KY



Bereaved families often face the holidays with fear and trepidation. Just the fact, holidays continue to go on, can cause outrage. Our sadness is monumental, and causes our bodies to resist moving on. We need to be gentle with ourselves; we are going through an emotional rehabilitation. Holidays often renew our grief, even if we are a distance from fresh grief.

We need to selectively choose what traditions are important to our family. If we over commit, we set ourselves up for a letdown when we cannot meet our goals. If you have some traditions that are very important and you are not physically up to doing them, you will find friends and extended family will feel honored if you ask for their help. Most people want to help you get through the holidays, but don't know what to do. Give them the opportunity to feel they are helpful in your healing.

Grieving cannot be put on the shelf until the holidays are over. We need to take time to feel our grief, and express our sadness. We also need to take time to try and put a bit of normality in our lives. We must remember it is not disrespectful to laugh. I'm sure our loved one would want us to surround ourselves with caring people who can help us through the holidays. A caring supportive person is one who encourages us to be the best we can be, not one who expects us to be as we used to be.

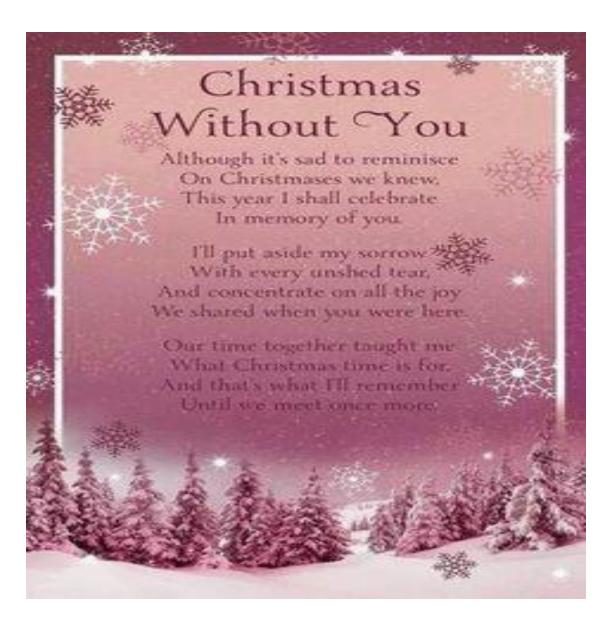
Our healing will eventually cause our pain to move out and make room for our loved ones memories. We learn to make a new life for ourselves. Holidays get better and we learn how to live again.

We tend to think of life's richest moments as being the joyous, fun filled, carefree days prior to losing our children and siblings. But, as I search for the most meaningful things that have given me strength and a real appreciation for life, they certainly do include the pain, overcoming my despair, losing my son, grandson, and six siblings. We cherish the friendships that doesn't always demand a smiling face, and those with the warm touch that says, "share your pain, let me be a part of your grief, don't worry about making us uneasy with tears, we have all been there." Much healing can take place through sharing as we learn to be very honest and courageous with our feelings, which helps us to find hope. Hope helps to restore our love for life, and gives us the strength to survive.

This holiday we will all miss our loved ones, who are no longer with us. Though it has been through much pain, you probably have never been so close to your child or sibling, or shared such a large part of your life with them. We hope the memories that ache with pain, can also bring you thoughts of love. For those of us who are further removed from our early grief, who can look back and appreciate the strength for our struggle, the compassion from seeing other's pain, wanting to become functional human beings again so we can contribute to making a better world, are gifts our children and siblings have given to us for our survival. These gifts are greater than any fancy bow tied box can contain. Look for your gifts and cherish them.

Marie Hofmockel TCF Valley Forge, PA









All of the people on the following list are bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. They understand what you are going through and have all wished to be included in this list in the hope that anyone who needs to talk will reach out to them. They are willing to talk with you at any time you need their support. Some have listed the specific area in which they have personal experience but they do not intend to imply that that is the only topic they wish to talk about. We all have experienced this journey through grief and it encompasses much more than the specifics surrounding our individual loss. Having a compassionate person to listen when you are having a bad day or just need someone to reach out to when you feel overwhelmed can make the difference in getting through one more day. We have all been there and understand, please feel free to contact any one of us.

Laura Hengel 281-908-5197 linnemanl@aol.com **Auto Accident**

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Heart Disease

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Auto Accident

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Multiple Loss Auto Accident Infant Child

Heart Disease